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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
*Extension Service*, WASHINGTON 25, D.C.



# VICTORY FARM VOLUNTEERS

September 3, 1946

For your information

TO ALL ASSISTANT STATE FARM LABOR SUPERVISORS, VFFV:

Subject: News Letter

## RENEWED FAITH

There's nothing like getting out in the field--seeing the farm labor program in action--and renewing your faith in the ability of concerted conscientious effort to get a job done better than it was done the year before. If the Victory Farm Volunteer program could point to no progress in the Nation's use of boys and girls to produce 1946 crops I'd personally consider that a sorry situation. Fortunately, I find ample evidences of progress. And by progress I mean wiser recruiting, improved selection and supervision of youth, more emphasis on safety, good wages, and shorter hours, and more service to farmers.

I can cite cases. In Connecticut, I found work hours in tobacco day-hauls reduced from 9 to 8. I found 41 supervisors for day-hauls not before supervised except by farmers. Maine's vegetable growers have also seen the light concerning work hours. Youth day-hauls out of Portland are working hours shortened to 5 and 6 hours a day. Two New Hampshire county farm labor men went to Boston to select live-ins recruited there and found this personal selection a sure bet for getting more successful boys. Pennsylvania benefited this year by talking up placements and handling of youth to farmers during the winter months.

Kansas found that closer contacts with vocational agriculture teachers this year resulted in wide interest in labor-saving equipment among vo-ag boys, who make a big summertime contribution on farms. In Utah's Weber County, every day-haul youth in cherries is insured for 5 cents a day through a charge to farmers made by the county farm labor association.

These are just a few observations from our recent field trips. There's more in the following paragraphs to prove my point.

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

In a column entitled "Coddling of Youth" Roger W. Babson writes this in the Washington Post, July 29:

"Labor legislation is necessary and I am for it; but it should apply equally to employers and young people. Furthermore, habits of work should be taught in our public schools along with French, Latin, music, and the so-called social studies. But first of all, churches, YMCAs, YMHAs (Young Men's Hebrew Association), CYOs (Catholic Youth Organization), and other groups interested in reducing juvenile delinquency should get the laws changed so as to encourage the vacation employment of young people." (My underlines.)



The words of this columnist and others outside the educational field indicate a growing interest in teaching young people the values of work.

SAYS RUSS ADAMS

Here's what Russel Adams told Roberta Clark during her recent visit to Oregon about the probable future of Oregon's

day-haul platoons:

"The platoon organization has to sell itself on the efficiency of the working group, not just on the approval of educators in the cities. I look for the number of platoons to be reduced in the future, but those that are efficient will be retained."

Oregon farmers continue to like these platoons of school-age youth who are usually organized for an entire season under one woman supervisor. A platoon sticks together and works as a unit. Platoons will stay by a farmer until his crop is harvested; farmers don't always get this kind of loyalty from migrants. One farmer said he couldn't use migrants and local youth together in the same fields--so he got rid of the migrants. Another farmer found that an all-adult platoon picked the crop quickly enough but destroyed his plants in so doing. This one asked for a youth platoon, having learned that the "kids" obeyed their platoon leader when instructed not to injure the plants.

NOTED: VFV IN PRINT

"Summer Work for Teachers"--pointing out the need for teachers as supervisors in tobacco fields--in Connecticut Teacher,

May 1946--written by Charlotte Goodwin Craig, Connecticut VFV supervisor until her recent resignation.

"Farms Depend on High School Labor"--full-page feature article about Maryland's corn detasseling camps with pictures in Sunday Times-Herald, Washington, D. C., July 28.

"Farm Hands From the City"--another Maryland VFV feature story--in the Sunday Star, Washington, D. C., gravure section, August 4.

"Youth With a Hoe"--feature article stressing the educational phase of the Nation's VFV program in the Christian Science Monitor magazine section, June 29, by Roberta Clark of our staff. The magazine's cover for that issue featured a VFV boy, a Staten Island, N.Y., lad on a Vermont farm.

"Iowa Boys Endure Rain, Sunburn To Sow Seed Corn Crops"--Des Moines Register, August 4.

WORD FROM THE WEST

From points west, we hear that youth in central Oklahoma had a major part in harvesting this year's blackberry crop....

That Idaho farmers will depend on school students to harvest half of the potato crop this fall.... That in those places in Texas where "we have used urban youth this year, we find a greater percentage of trained boys and girls".... In Nevada, there's been a scarcity of the larger boys for farm work this year but they got out 100 junior and senior high boys and girls for onion weeding.... And in Montana, they'll use a lot of youngsters in the autumn potato harvest. Most town youth who do summertime farm work have been finding their own jobs....



Of 3,077 corn detassellers in northeast Nebraska this summer, 90 percent are youth. The Fremont home demonstration agent did very fine work on problems of breakfast, noon lunches, night rest, shoes and apparel for Nebraska's girl detassellers, writes J. V. Srb.

#### AMONG THE YANKEES....

And now a few more notes on my trip to beautiful New England. Vermont, I found, is again operating a fine live-in program, somewhat smaller this year (600 youth instead of 700), what with a few returning veterans and Franch Canadian workers available....New Hampshire was again using about 500 boys and girls a day in the Coos County bean harvest and, in the White Mountains area, another 500 youngsters in beans from private summer camps. These camp youth work a 4-hour day, and their cooperation with farm labor people has certainly been excellent....I was especially glad to find more vegetable growers in the Portland, Maine, area accepting the supervision idea for day-hauls. Portland sends out about 1,000 youth a day.

I stopped in Kingston with the Rhode Island folks and found them using a scattered few youth for truck crop day-hauls and live-ins....Visited an excellent tobacco camp in Amherst, Massachusetts, where Pennsylvania girls were housed in an Amherst College fraternity house. Live-in numbers in Massachusetts are down this year.

As I have said somewhere in this letter, Connecticut is bringing about real improvement in its tobacco day-hauls, and Connecticut tobacco camps are maintaining their usual high standard. If you don't think these camps are good, here's an observation I couldn't help making after seeing them--camp facilities, the physical plants, are superior to many expensive private camps which I saw elsewhere in New England. One of the best features for youth's welfare is the safety transportation program. Two men on the State farm labor staff--and they're deputized, incidentally--are assigned specifically to checking compliance with Connecticut's rigid transportation regulations.

#### PENNSY VISIT

And I want to say a word about my visit to Pennsylvania early in July. They're using a lot of youth to get the job done this year and it's significant that they get them all from within Pennsylvania's borders, supplying neighboring States with VFV's as well. The big emphasis they're putting on their live-in program this year has enthusiastic backing from Director Fry, who tells me there is every indication of continuing this use of urban boys in the future. Pennsylvania was also planning a cherry camp for 100 boys, although I didn't get to visit it. I did visit some live-ins who were making their time count in a busy haying season.

#### DELINQUENCY AND VFV

The National Conference for the Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency is a big title for an important meeting to be held here in Washington, October 21 to 31. The Department of Justice is sponsoring the conference--and it concerns us in the Department of Agriculture because of the youth delinquency problems in rural areas. We commonly associate misdeeds of the modern young people with big cities, but I'm rather surprised to discover the seriousness of the problem in nonurban communities.

I mention the conference although it may not directly concern any of you. If the Washington meeting does not, however, the subject does. It really



concerns every American. And I've been thinking that we who've had so much to do with farm work for both rural and urban youngsters during the war ought to have some constructive ideas for these conferees. I'll be glad to pass any suggestions you may have along to the USDA committee.

#### MORE FROM THE WEST

Miss Clark speaks glowingly of her trip to the west coast--and I'm willing to believe that the scenery and hospitality had something to do with her impressions. She also came back with good reports--which we're used to hearing--about the way local recruitment of youth in the Western States is solving many a farmer's big labor needs.

W. O. Stark has had to be away from the Kansas youth program during the early part of the summer to take over the Great Bend labor and combine office. But he reports wonderful cooperation from Kansas schools and another year of fine help in the wheat harvest from Kansas boys....In Missouri, Roberta talked briefly with Don Nelson, finding that the principal use of urban youth labor will be in corn detasseling....Colorado has a scattered few VFV's this year--principally in vegetable cultivation--but A. J. Hamman seems to think that in a few years there will be very little need for youth in Colorado agriculture.

Utah's new VFV man, Lawrence Brough, showed our staff member the big cherry-picking activities of youth in the Ogden and Salt Lake City areas. It's no exaggeration that Utah cherry growers relied wholly on "kids" for labor this year. It's significant, too, that Utah made tremendous use of youngsters in sugar-beet thinning this year, overcoming prejudices against "stoop labor" jobs....In Washington, with the help of Art Kulin and Walt Zuger, she saw abundant youth labor harvesting a bumper raspberry crop. There seems to be no shortage of local labor in the Northwest, and both Oregon and Washington are making efficient use of this labor supply....A stop in South Dakota gave Miss Clark a good chance to see the fine weed-pulling program in the Sioux Falls area. Here farmers are keeping their fingers crossed in the hope that someone recruits "kid" weed-pullers for them again next year.

#### GOOD RECRUITIN' IN NEW YORK

Before I returned from my New England visit, Miss Clark also got a chance to see Jack Weaver's Farm Cadet program in New York. Cadet live-ins are continuing to make a good record for themselves under excellent county supervision--and there appears to be no let-up in the demand for them. Farmers visited in New York's "north country" were vociferously of the opinion that they'd need this kind of help next year. Miss Clark was especially pleased with the high-caliber youth recruited out of New York City--a tribute to the recruiting job done by the New York City schools. Good recruiting was noticeable also in the girls at the Cooperstown camp for snap beans. New York operated four camps this year under the cooperative Extension-Department of Education program.

#### ACCORDING TO DIRECTOR SPENCER

Connecticut's farm labor camps for youth are helping to build better citizens. And that statement comes from Extension Director Arthur P. Spencer, of Florida. Director Spencer visited several of the camps and was high in his praise for what he saw. Said he, according to the Hartford Daily Courant, "The Florida Extension Service welcomes the opportunity afforded these youth to spend a healthy,



educational, outdoor summer earning money and an appreciation of the economic interrelation between business, industry, and agriculture."

WINDING UP....

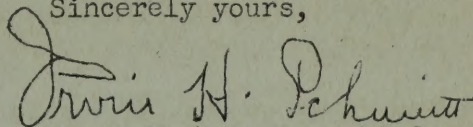
Letters from a few other States keep us up to date on current activities....

For instance, Iowa's first youth camp

this year housed 500 boys for corn detasseling--and produced a few headaches, as first experiences with a camp always do. Next year, the Iowa folks will aim for greater selectivity and other improvements....In Illinois, a fourth of the Chicago VFV live-ins of last year returned to the same farms this summer and they've used both girls and women for detasseling....Ohio placed 1,867 youth in farm work in June....Michigan's "live-aways" are making up in quality for what they lack in quantity this year. Numbers are fewer. But the boys, chiefly from Detroit, are more reliable workers than before.

Now that we're back in the office for a more extended stay, you can count on more regular service from this news letter in the near future.

Sincerely yours,



Irvin H. Schmitt, Chief  
Victory Farm Volunteers Division  
Extension Farm Labor Program

(Copy to State supervisor,  
directors, editors)



